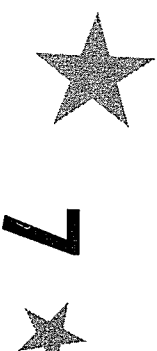★ **THE PARTY DECIDES** ★

Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform

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The Invisible Primary: Theory and Evidence

The invisible primary is the principal institutional means by which party members decide the person they want to be their nominee—the equivalent of bargaining at party conventions in the old system. In this chapter, the first of two on the invisible primary, we try to understand how this institution works. We begin with a rough model of how hundreds of party members, all observing the candidates in action and announcing endorsements as they make them, could create an information stream that would enable party members to coordinate on a widely acceptable choice. Next, we consider how to determine whether the invisible primary is (as we claim) party-centered or (as others believe) candidate-centered. The question is not an easy one. Finally, we sketch each of the ten contested nominations of the period from 1980 to 2004, assessing our key theoretical propositions about the invisible primary. In the next chapter, we develop statistical tests of some of these propositions.

A Model of Party Decision-Making in the Invisible Primary

The party members who make endorsements in the invisible primary differ in their preferences and are therefore likely to differ in their first choice of candidates. Yet, as experienced party players,

they must know that factional favorites are a poor bet to unify the party. They may therefore be expected to support a candidate who is acceptable to key groups in the party. But which candidate this might be is not always easy to tell at the start of the process.

Estimating the national appeal of candidates presents another dilemma. Most candidates in the invisible primary are new to national politics. They typically have won elections in their home state, but the country is so diverse that local success often fails to translate into national appeal. Public opinion polls about candidates who have never run in national politics are not much guide. Figuring out who will flourish on the national stage and who will bomb is much more art and instinct than science.

In this situation of very imperfect information, party insiders must somehow coordinate on a nominee. Game theorists have studied a variety of such situations as coordination games. Here is a simple example: An experimenter offers to pay two randomly chosen New Yorkers a million dollars each if they can meet within two hours at some location in New York City. The individuals don't even know what the other looks like, but if they think about it, they may nonetheless win the prize. A natural solution would be for each to go to some obvious place—called a focal point—and hope that the other makes the same obvious choice. A natural focal point here would be Grand Central Station, which is a famous landmark and also centrally located.

Coordination on a presidential nominee has many differences from this example. One is that, given the million dollar payoff in the New York experiment, no one cares whether the focal point is Grand Central Station or the Empire State Building; in a presidential nomination, people care where they meet. Another difference is that, in the experiment, the players could not communicate; but the party members trying to coordinate in the invisible primary can communicate. Finally, the experiment involved only two players; in the invisible primary, thousands of participants choose. But the invisible primary is still a kind of coordination game.

Here, then, is a coordination game that better captures what may happen in the invisible primary. We call it the restaurant game. Imagine that a large number of people are trying to coordinate on a place to eat and that, if a majority manage to go to the same restaurant, they will get some benefit, such as a price discount. At the same time, all want a restaurant that matches their culinary preferences, which differ. Some diners, whom we may call purists, are more finicky than others.

In this game, diners make their choice of restaurant one at a time. No one can taste any food until everyone has chosen, but diners have three

pieces of information: They can inspect each restaurant's menu; they observe each diner's choice as it is made; and they know each diner's preference for meat, fish, vegetarian, or whatever. A few diners have a connoisseur's knowledge of restaurants, because they pay a lot more attention than the rest, but no one is completely sure who is a connoisseur and who is not.

Suppose the available restaurants are a vegetarian restaurant, a steak house, a fish place, and Denny's. One might suspect that the nonspecialty restaurant, Denny's, would be the common choice, and it might well be. But suppose early deciders favor the fish house, and that they are a diverse crowd of vegetarians, families with children, fish lovers, and Texans. The remaining diners might suspect that the early deciders know something nonobvious, perhaps because they are connoisseurs. The presence of vegetarians at a fish house would be especially informative, since it could not reflect an intense preference for fish. If, as diners continue making choices, the fish house continues to draw a large and diverse crowd, even some diners with intense preferences for food other than fish might conclude that they can get a decent meal at the fish place—and earn the group discount as well.

This restaurant game would play out differently in different conditions. If the diners are very hungry, they might converge more quickly than if they had just feasted. It would also matter if the town has only one good restaurant, many good restaurants, or none. If it has only one, all diners would probably converge on it quickly, eager for a good table and knowing that everyone else will choose it. If the town has many excellent restaurants, the choice among good ones might be almost random, depending on which happened to become a focal point, perhaps because of central location. And if all restaurants are bad, diners might be slow to choose, hoping for a better choice to emerge.

The invisible primary has the properties of this game, including the incentive for participants to converge on a choice that can unify the group. An especially important common feature is that individuals of diverse preferences—here ideological preferences—must converge on a choice that might not be many people's ideal choice. Also as in the restaurant game, the sequential revelation of endorsements in the invisible primary enables decision-makers to make their choices in light of the preferences of others and the information of connoisseurs. The connoisseurs' information could involve both the depth of candidates' commitment to party values and their likely national appeal.

The restaurant game has three implications for understanding the invisible primary. The first is that party players who are motivated to converge on a common choice will be able to do so, even when none of the choices is

particularly good. This is important because it means that an institutional replacement for the old-style party convention—a process of information-sharing and coordination through sequential choice—is potentially present in the structure of the invisible primary. The second is that agreement may be easier to achieve for some choice sets than others. And the third is that, in difficult cases, agreement may depend on arbitrary factors, such as a focal point.

The restaurant game does not guarantee that players will converge on the best possible choice. Potential for nonoptimal choice follows from the fact that focal points can be arbitrary and can determine outcomes. Yet it would be hard to argue that old-style party conventions, with their staged bandwagons, made choices that were more optimal. Defense of both institutions must be more modest. Both the convention system and the invisible primary are probably good at coordinating on an outstanding candidate when one exists—and at coordinating on a merely acceptable candidate when no outstanding candidate is available.

Candidate-Centered Politics?

The restaurant game is a model of a party-centered process. It is party-centered because decision-makers (party players) choose, and the objects of choice (candidates) do nothing except try to make themselves seem attractive. Many scholars, however, believe that presidential nominations are a candidate-centered process. Let us, therefore, consider what it would mean to have a candidate-centered nomination system and how such a system can be empirically distinguished from one that is party-centered.

An invisible primary that is candidate centered would be one in which the efforts of candidates dominate the process. In the context of the invisible primary, this would mean candidates building so much public support and raising so much campaign money that party insiders—officeholders, activists, interest group leaders—have no choice but to jump on the bandwagon. Party insiders would have no capacity to say no to a popular or well-financed candidate they dislike; rather, they would flock, as if having no will of their own, to the strongest of the candidates contending for their support.

Of course, candidates do make ardent efforts to win over party insiders by building poll support and raising huge amounts of campaign cash. Yet the fact that candidates make these efforts does not mean they succeed. Party insiders might sit back, survey the field, and coolly follow their own counsel.

Another metaphor may be helpful here. Suppose that garnering insider endorsements in the invisible primary is like a competition among fisher-

men to catch the most fish. If competitors are fishing in something as big as an ocean, and if the number of fish they catch depends on their skill in manipulating the fish to take their bait, the contest would properly be called fisherman-centered. But suppose that competitors are fishing in a small pond having only a few fish. And suppose each fish carefully examines each fisherman's bait and deliberates with other fish about whose bait to take. One would call this a fish-centered contest, since the fish are deciding the outcome on the basis of their own collective preferences. The fishermen might be trying just as hard as in the first scenario, but the fish would be in control.

The main point here is that casual bystanders, by looking at fishermen alone, could easily form an incorrect impression about the dynamics of the process. This is because it would be easier to observe the contestants working hard to land their catch than the beneath-the-surface machinations that might be present. The same could be true of the role of candidates in the invisible primary. Observation that candidates work hard to get endorsements is not definitive evidence that they dominate the process.

Whether the invisible primary is dominated by candidates or party insiders is critical to our analysis. In our view of parties, intense policy demanders form party coalitions precisely in order to get the upper hand over candidates. So if candidates dominate the invisible primary, and if the invisible primary determines presidential nominations, our group-centric view of parties is wrong.

How, then, can one tell which group—candidates or party insiders—is actually in the driver's seat of the invisible primary? One approach would be to peer beneath surface events to observe whether candidates are overpowering the endorsers or, alternatively, the endorsers seem to be making up their own minds. Direct observation is not the strongest methodological tool, but for a case in which we have little sure knowledge about what is going on, it makes a good starting point. We therefore propose to go through each nomination contest since 1980 in order to answer as best we can each of the following questions:

- **Free Will or Forced Choice?** Do party insiders make endorsements because they actually favor the given candidate, or because the candidate is so strong that party endorsers simply capitulate to him?

- **Small Pond or Vast Ocean?** Do candidates go trolling for support in a small pool of ideological and party regulars, or do they build their campaign from a larger pool of one-time activists and persons loyal to them personally?[1]

- **United Front or Factional Favorite?** Do groups make decisions in light of the likely preferences of other groups and the need to win the fall election,

or does each group support its own first-choice candidate, regardless of party considerations?

Our theoretical expectation is that most candidate support comes from a small pond of party leaders and regulars who make free choices to form a united front. On the other hand, we do not expect candidates to rely primarily on first-time activists, succeed with factional appeals, or force endorsers to knuckle under to their pressures.

These matters are not easy to determine. Still, as we shall see in the remainder of this chapter, some illuminating evidence does exist. For example, we shall see several cases in which party insiders clearly do resist the pressures of strong candidates. We shall also see some instances in which candidates tried to build their campaigns within the small world of party regulars and other instances in which they went outside regular party networks to seek support.

The advantage of this "look and see" examination of individual cases is that we can pick up whatever seems important, whether we anticipated it or not and whether we can systematically measure it or not. The disadvantage of the method is that our observations will be unsystematic and susceptible to interpretive bias. The next chapter will therefore go on to quantitative tests of our three propositions. If this statistical analysis reaches the same conclusions as our qualitative analysis in this chapter, we may begin to feel confident we understand what is going on.

Under the Hood in the New System

In the following pages, we provide descriptive accounts of the invisible primary of each recent nomination. As in chapter 5, where we sketched the last contests of the old system, we do not aspire to complete histories. We aim, rather, to focus on details that indicate whether nominations are candidate- or party-centered.

Republicans in 1980: The Right Candidate Wins

In the early 1950s Ronald Reagan began traveling the country for General Electric to make motivational speeches in company plants. Gradually those speeches became more political and then more partisan. In 1964 he gave a nationally televised speech for Barry Goldwater that raised $600,000—about $3.7 million in current dollars—for the senator's struggling campaign. But more important for our purposes, the speech demonstrated Reagan's national appeal. Reagan continued to raise money for the party, and when he became California governor in 1966, fund-raising speeches were "done on

a virtually any-time, any-place basis" (Chester, Hodgson, and Page 1969, 196). The heavy travel schedule continued after he left office in 1974, with most of the money he raised donated to worthy conservative candidates.

Reagan's 1980 campaign for president actually began almost immediately upon the conclusion of his 1976 campaign and involved revisiting friends and supporters he had made over some twenty years as a popular speaker on the Republican Party's "rubber chicken" circuit. A syndicated newspaper column and a weekly radio show made him continuously visible to those interested in him. The result, as David Broder wrote in early 1980, was that Reagan "has the advantage of the most extensive intraparty organizational network, built on the loyalty of his 1976 supporters and maintained for the past two years by his interim political organization, Citizens for the Republic, one of the biggest spending political action committees in the 1978 campaign."

Reagan was the recognized leader of the largest faction in the party, the conservative group that had fought for Taft and Goldwater but also accepted the need to compromise when necessary. However, the conservative wing of the party saw little need to compromise this year—nor should it have. Its candidate had won the governorship of the largest state in the union against a popular Democrat and been reelected handily. Reagan had also demonstrated that he could play on the national stage. In 1968, only two years past the end of his acting career, Reagan came close to beating party warhorse Richard Nixon for the Republican nomination. In 1976 he came even closer to beating incumbent President Gerald Ford in a drawn-out primaries fight.

Thus, by the time the curtain went up on the invisible primary for the 1980 nomination, Reagan had toiled longer in the field, earned more debts of gratitude in the party, and honed his campaign skills more finely than any politician of his generation. Except for Gerald Ford, who did not enter the race, Reagan also had the strongest poll numbers of any candidate. Reagan was not like Robert Taft, a favorite of the conservatives but a terrible campaigner; he was a favorite of the conservatives and a terrific campaigner. As Andrew Busch observed, "Reagan's success was, in essence, the logical fruit of the organizational dominance won by the conservatives in 1964" (1992, 539).

Yet Reagan did not dominate the invisible primary. By our endorsement count, he got just 48 percent of all publicly reported endorsements, many from the same party organizations that were taken over or founded by Goldwater supporters in 1964. Bob Dole, a candidate with weaker conservative credentials and weaker campaign skills, would get 68 percent of party endorsements in 1996,[2] and Al Gore, also a weak candidate, would get 82

percent in 2000.[3] Despite Reagan's long work for the party and his political strengths, he was not the runaway winner of the invisible primary.

The main reason for resistance to Reagan was the widespread belief that, as ex-president Gerald Ford put it, "A very conservative Republican cannot win in a national election" (*Time* 1980). But Reagan's managers recognized this problem and sought to reach out. Reagan announced his candidacy in the liberal capital of America, New York City; he made a showy visit to Capitol Hill for the purpose of welcoming national support; and his campaign gave guidance to journalists that "Reagan is . . . trying to reposition himself, not as the factional favorite of GOP conservatives but as the 'natural standard bearer' for Republicans of all stripes" (Broder 1979, A1).

But the party's moderate wing didn't buy it. For them, the only question was: Who would be the candidate of the moderates?

One possibility was former president Ford. As titular head of the party, he spoke at many party events in the late 1970s and ran well in Republican preference polls. But Ford generated no excitement among party insiders and never formally entered the race. Another moderate possibility was George Herbert Walker Bush of Texas. Bush's record as a vote-getter was weak. He won two terms in the House of Representatives but lost twice running for the Senate. Following the second Senate loss, Presidents Nixon and Ford appointed him to a series of high jobs: U.S. representative to China, ambassador to the United Nations, chair of the Republican National Committee, and director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). These appointments gave Bush what may have been the best resume of any presidential candidate since John Quincy Adams. He was virtually unknown to the public at the start of the race, but threw himself into campaigning around the country. Like Jimmy Carter, upon whom he modeled his campaign, Bush spent much time campaigning "out in the country," especially the early primary states of Iowa and New Hampshire.

The more promising pick to emerge as the champion of the moderates was the Republican minority leader in the Senate, Howard Baker of Tennessee. Baker was a respected figure in Washington, articulate and telegenic, and favorably remembered (except perhaps in conservative Republican circles) for his performance in the Senate Watergate investigation. As a result, he was second to Reagan in most polls measuring the preferences of ordinary Republicans for the party nomination. Baker's campaign developed as follows:

throughout the spring and summer [of 1979], while agents for George Bush won commitments from leading Republican moderates in Iowa, the Baker campaign was largely invisible. The candidate himself stayed on the job

as minority leader of the Senate. The decision on the new Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty [SALT] was supposed to be coming to the floor [of the Senate], and Baker and his lieutenants were convinced it would be the center of a major national debate over foreign policy . . . and if he was on those nightly network news programs leading the opposition to SALT II, so much the better for his campaign. (Germond and Witcover 1981, 104)

Baker's standing in Washington politics and in the polls might have made him a focal point in the contest for centrist support. Yet it was Bush who, by campaigning hard in Iowa while Baker campaigned hard in Washington, emerged as the alternative to Reagan (see figure 5.1). Indeed, Bush actually managed more endorsements in Iowa than Reagan did, which helps explain why Bush could beat Reagan in the Iowa caucuses and then claim that "big mo" (momentum) would now propel him to the nomination.

A party's sitting governors are sometimes a force in the invisible primary, but not so in the 1980 Republican race (see table 5.2). Most governors were moderates and wary of Reagan for that reason. Yet, according to Germond and Witcover, GOP governors were reluctant to endorse Bush because he lacked "force of personality" and seemed more generally a poor campaigner (118). Thus, as the Reagan bandwagon picked up speed, Republican governors neither jumped onto it nor lay down in front of it. Watchful waiting was their stance. When Bush eventually lost to Reagan in the voter primaries, the governors found it easy to accept the California governor as the party standard bearer.

Former Texas Governor John Connally is also worth mentioning. The phrase *strong candidate* could have been invented simply to describe him. Tall, handsome, and well-built, Connally was a forceful personality, a charismatic campaigner, a solid conservative, and a superb fund-raiser. If anyone could stop the Reagan juggernaut, one might expect it would be Connally. But he had shallow roots in the GOP—he had been a Democrat until 1973—and had done little to connect to the party's conservative activists. Connally raised more money than anyone else in the invisible primary, mostly from fellow Texans, but won only 13 percent of endorsements. In the end, he spent $11 million and won only one convention delegate. Connally had been tarnished by scandal, but what his spectacular failure mainly shows, in our view, is that the invisible primary is a partisan rather than a candidate-dominated affair, and the voter primaries are dominated more by party favorites than by big spenders.

To summarize: The invisible primary was won by the leader of the party's largest faction, a proven vote-getter who spent decades building support in the party. Reagan did not, however, run as a factional leader; from the start,

he recognized factional support as a problem and sought to surmount it. At the same time, party insiders were not steamrolled by Reagan. The most important of his natural opponents—moderate governors—adopted a wait-and-see attitude, and other moderates backed a candidate of their own. The choice of the moderates was not Washington power broker and media star Howard Baker; it was George Bush, who had a record as a weak vote-getter but who took the trouble to campaign to party regulars out in the country. Every element of this nomination contest—Reagan's deep ties to party regulars, his attempt to bridge factional divisions, the dominance of party regulars over media politics in the rise of Bush over Baker, the collapse of the campaign of the big-spending and personally charismatic but newly Republican John Connally—suggests that the process was party- rather than candidate-centered. As a final touch, Bush later joined Reagan's ticket as his vice president, thereby achieving the united front to which parties aspire.

Democrats in 1980: Jimmy Carter, Party Man

Politicians commonly acknowledge groups they "owe" for their election. But when Jimmy Carter took office, he made a point of saying that he owed his election to no one. Traditional party groups could hardly argue, but it is a good bet they were not happy about it. Nor were they likely pleased with Carter's "curious neutrality" toward their preferences as he created a cabinet packed with technocrats rather than interest-group ambassadors (Polsby 1983, 103). Nor again were Democratic leaders in Congress likely pleased when Carter attacked their pet spending projects as wasteful "pork." This was the behavior of a maverick, not a party man.

So when Carter's presidency got into trouble, as presidencies often do, these groups did not all rush to prop up the party leader. Some rushed instead to back Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts as an insurgent for the Democratic Party nomination in 1980. A number of those who made statements of support for Kennedy in the invisible primary for the 1980 nomination are listed in table 7.1.

These endorsements are notable for two reasons. First, they come from some of the key power centers in the Democratic coalition. Second, they were all made before Kennedy announced his candidacy on November 3 or, in many cases, before the Massachusetts senator had even made up his mind, which was apparently in late summer.[4] We underscore these points because the Kennedy challenge could be taken as evidence of candidate-centered politics. Kennedy was, after all, a strong candidate who challenged the leader of his party. But, like Eisenhower in 1952, Goldwater in 1964, and McCarthy in 1968, he launched his campaign only after an important faction of his party signaled strong support.

Table 7.1: Endorsements for Kennedy in 1980

Name	Group	Date of report
Cardiss Collins	Chair, Congressional Black Caucus	February 14
Andrew Stein	Borough president	February 18
Bill Fenton	President, International Machinists Union	March 17
Paul O'Dwyer	Former city council president	March 26
Ralph Nader	Consumer advocate	May 8
NAACP	Civil rights organization	June 25
Americans for Democratic Action	Liberal interest group	June 25
William Winpisinger	President, Machinists Union	July 6
Michael Harrington	Author (socialist)	August 5
George Poulin	Vice president, Machinists Union	August 5
Edmund Muskie	U.S. senator	September 26
AFL-CIO	Labor union	September 26
Margaret Costanza	Former aide to Jimmy Carter	September 29
Joseph Brennan	Governor	October 16
George McGovern	U.S. senator	October 19
Morris Dees, Jr.	Former fundraiser for Jimmy Carter	October 19
International Chemical Workers	Labor union	October 25
Painters and Allied Trades Union	Labor union	October 27
Dominic Fornaro	President, state AFL-CIO	October 27
David Wilson	State labor leader	October 27
Frank Martino	President, United Rubber Workers	October 27
Jane Byrne	Mayor of Chicago	October 28
Arnold Miller	President, United Mine Workers	October 30

But if Kennedy had strong support in the Democratic Party, Carter had more, including some from liberal groups. Although an outsider, he eventually discovered that he couldn't govern without the support of his party's leading officeholders and began reaching out to the party establishment. Thus, by our count, Carter won some 65 percent of endorsements, with most of the rest going to Kennedy. The most notable feature of Carter's support is that it was top-heavy with governors: twenty-one of thirty-one endorsed Carter, mostly in the early months of the invisible primary; Kennedy garnered only one, with the rest staying on the sidelines (see table 6A.2).

Because the media anticipated a run by Kennedy, they reported numerous polls on the preferences of Democratic voters for Kennedy versus Carter throughout the invisible primary year of 1979. These polls typically favored Kennedy by about 2 to 1, until the Iran hostage crisis broke in November. At that point, the public rallied strongly to Carter. The pattern of insider endorsements was not, however, much affected by these polls. Most party

insiders favored Carter when he was unpopular with Democratic voters and continued to favor him at about the same rate when his popularity improved. The insiders who rallied to Carter were not simply heeding public opinion; resisting public opinion would be a better description.

Reagan's nearly successful challenge of Ford in the 1976 primary highlighted the potential for factional groups to challenge presidents they disliked. The strong support of party insiders for Carter seems, in this light, notable. Though some party groups and much of the party rank-and-file were prepared to dump Carter, most party insiders remained loyal to the leader. Party insiders thus acted more like a party than a collection of factions.

Democrats in 1984: The Insider versus the Outsiders

The 1984 Democratic contest turned on three separate campaigns, each in its own way illuminating. The nominee was Walter Mondale, who had been Jimmy Carter's vice president. Mondale won 56 percent of insider support in the invisible primary and yet almost lost in the voter primaries to Senator Gary Hart of Colorado, who won only 4 percent of insider endorsements. That someone like Hart could nearly upend the party favorite shows the tenuousness of insider influence over the voter primaries. So, in another way, does the success of Jesse Jackson, the second African American to run for president.[5] Jackson had little chance of winning the nomination, but nonetheless won 10 percent of the delegates in the primaries and in other ways affected the dynamics of the race. Yet the bottom line is that, despite Hart and despite Jackson, party insiders rallied to Mondale in the invisible primary, and Mondale won the nomination in the voter primaries.

So let us begin with Mondale. A cardinal principle of campaigning in the invisible primary is that the candidate must please key party groups on the issues they care most about. This was a principle that Mondale, when he was campaigning for the 1976 nomination, had not quite mastered, as shown in this account of his solicitation of a donation from a millionaire heiress: "In her lakeside living room, Mrs. Benton rises to ask Mondale if he favors income redistribution to aid the poor. Mondale has been briefed that she always asks this question and that a 'sock-it-to-the-rich' answer would unlock bank vaults for him. Instead, he gives a thoughtful and straightforward exposition of the problems and difficulties of welfare reform. 'I won't stand there in a two-million-dollar house and do a liberal two-step for them,' he tells staff later" (Hadley 1976, 33). Shortly afterward, Mondale dropped out of the invisible primary for the 1976 election. "He didn't like what the campaign was doing to him," Mondale told an aide (35).

In 1983, however, Mondale was back in the game, and on this run for the nomination he had no difficulty telling important people what they wanted to hear. In fact, Mondale came under criticism as the tool of special interests, promising everything to everyone. At one point, Governor Mario Cuomo of New York met with Mondale and

urged him to take the lead in confronting . . . runaway spending on programs such as Medicare that was contributing so much to the deficit.
"I told him," Cuomo reported the next day, "that he needed to show that he could say no to somebody."
"What did he say?" Cuomo was asked.
"He said no to me," Cuomo replied. (Germond and Witcover 1985, 60)

As the candidate who would not say no to his party's key constituencies, Mondale won their endorsements by the bushel. Mondale also won the endorsements of sixteen of the party's thirty-four governors, compared to zero endorsements for the rest of the field together. The Mondale campaign prized endorsements for a clear reason: "If you signed up a governor, a mayor, a labor leader, it was his organization you were after, not his name or his personal following, and you moved in swiftly to secure it. His organization became yours; you simply preempted it and chalked up one less place you would have to flood with your own time, talent, and money" (Goldman and Fuller 1985, 56).

The most coveted endorsement in the Democratic Party is a union endorsement. Unions have some direct capacity to sway their members, but they also have expertise in the art of political campaigns—use of phone banks, neighborhood canvassing, and election day transportation to the polls. The president of the AFL-CIO, Lane Kirkland, was determined to be proactive in the 1984 contest. "If we're not in it," Kirkland said, "if we wait until the convention is over, then we are stuck with other people's choices [for nominee] one more time. Why should we be stuck with other people's choices . . . ?" (Dark 2004, 181). Hence, Kirkland set out to unify the labor movement around a single candidate and make an early endorsement that would shape the direction of the contest. He never used the term *focal point*, but he seems to have had that idea in mind.

Because Kirkland made no secret of his strategy of early endorsement, all of the major candidates sought AFL-CIO backing. "Hart wanted labor's favor, badly enough to *beg* Kirkland for it over lunch. . . . [Candidate John] Glenn wanted it, too. One of his operatives had guessed the worth of the endorsement to be $20 million. . . . [Candidate Alan] Cranston, the senior senator from California, was the most ardent suitor of all. . . . [A young

union official] was genuinely fond of Cranston and didn't have the heart to tell him what he was thinking: *Alan, you're crazy*" (Goldman and Fuller 1985, 58). What made Cranston crazy was that labor had its deepest and strongest ties to Mondale and was not about to give its support to anyone else.[6] Besides serving labor causes for some two decades, Mondale was a close personal friend of Kirkland. But Hart was, if anything, crazier. Cranston was at least a reliable supporter of labor; Hart sought labor's support despite his advocacy of free-trade policies that were anathema to the AFL-CIO.

Labor also worked with officials from the Democratic National Committee to change the schedule of primaries to the benefit of insider candidates. The idea, as proposed by a reform commission, was to compress the schedule of primaries—to "front load" them—so that outsider candidates like Carter would no longer have time to build momentum through early victories. The primaries would come so fast after one another that only a candidate who built a strong organization ahead of the primaries would be able to succeed. The effect, as journalists Goldman and Fuller wrote, would be to "rig the game against outsiders and for . . . men like Mondale and Kennedy, with national names and connections" (55–56). As David Broder added, "When the Hunt Commission was meeting, in the aftermath of Carter's defeat, there was a 'never again' feeling about such outsider candidates. Mondale and Kennedy supporters and AFL-CIO operatives were influential in the commission decisions, as were elected officials anxious to reclaim their place of influence in the convention hall" (Broder 1983, 2).

With party insiders thus committed to Mondale,[7] Gary Hart plotted an outsider strategy. He believe that, despite the Hunt Commission's attempt to front-load the system, it was still possible, in the fashion of Carter, to do better than expected in Iowa by finishing second behind Mondale, ride the publicity to a big win in New Hampshire, and coast to the nomination. Hart shared his strategy with anyone who would listen, including the media. When asked if he wasn't simply copying Carter's strategy from 1976, Hart replied that "Carter followed *my strategy*" (Goldman and Fuller 1985, 88). The comment was fair: Hart had been McGovern's campaign manager in 1972 and helped engineer the better-than-expected showing in New Hampshire that had been critical to McGovern's success.

To score his first victory in Iowa, Hart needed some people power, and for that he turned not to leaders but to volunteers, as described in this passage: "A campaign was concentric circles. [Hart] argued tirelessly. You started with small cells of activists, meeting in a café or a living room with a sign-up sheet at the door, and kept expanding outward, circle upon circle, until your message had reached tens of thousands of people" (90).

As the Hart campaign swung into action in Iowa's main population centers, it found itself in competition with the stronger campaigns, especially Mondale's. Hart's response was inspired. He took his campaign to rural areas where it would face little competition. The ploy worked. Gary Hart captured enough votes in the Iowa countryside to finish second to Mondale, a showing that impressed pundits and won him the publicity he needed to fight the next race in New Hampshire. Hart won that contest by a wide margin and went on to give Mondale a serious run in the string of state-by-state contests.

The third major candidate in the race was Jackson, who was both a factional candidate and an astute politician. Like many African Americans, Jackson believed that the Democratic Party took the votes of blacks for granted. As a Chicagoan, he was particularly upset when Mondale refused to support Harold Washington's attempt to become the first black mayor of Chicago. As Jackson and early supporters pondered an entry by Jackson into the race for the Democratic nomination, "Getting elected [president] was never seriously part of the picture. . . . The campaign was conceived instead as a kind of protracted civil-rights demonstration raised to a higher plane" (Goldman and Fuller, 107).

In early 1983, a gathering of national black leaders debated whether a black leader, whether Jackson or someone else, should run for president. It was a hard question for them. Some worried that a black candidacy would simply throw the nomination to a candidate who was less friendly to black causes than Mondale. Others worried that it would hurt black candidates with biracial coalitions. But others "argued that the risks were worth talking for the payoff in heightened attention to black concerns and increased participation in politics" (Goldman and Fuller, 109).

These are, of course, the concerns that any faction faces as it jostles for position within its party coalition. The Dixiecrats of 1948 and the Goldwater supporters of 1964 faced them as well. When Jackson did finally enter the race, his entry forced black leaders to choose. Of the fifty African Americans in our sample of endorsers, thirty-six supported Jackson and fourteen supported Mondale. But the black support Mondale got was important. An especially important black leader for Mondale was Mayor Richard Arrington of Birmingham, Alabama. He was newly elected and the head of a well-oiled local machine. As Arrington explained to his constituents:

I have not lost my racial pride, but I have to deal with the reality of Ronald Reagan bearing down on us. . . .

So we come to the point of a tough decision. . . . No matter how strongly we feel about Jesse Jackson, the reality is that this is not a race between Jesse

Jackson and Ronald Reagan. Reagan has put more people in soup lines, more people out of work and tried to do the unthinkable of turning back our hard-won gains. We have to avoid illusions, and we can't afford an emotional binge because we aren't going to feel very good if after a good emotional high we wind up with Reagan. (Smothers 1984, B9)

Arrington made his commitment to Mondale early on and told him to announce it when it best suited his purposes. The time Mondale chose was when Jackson scored a media coup by going to Syria to win the release of an American fighter pilot who had been shot down over Lebanon. The announcement of Arrington's support gave Mondale a media presence in the middle of Jackson's big news week. In the big Super Tuesday primary, blacks in Birmingham voted 2 to 1 for Mondale, a better rate than in other parts of the state. As Arrington observed before the vote, "Blacks here are experiencing a situation of having their first black mayor, and they want me to succeed and are willing to go the extra mile with me to help me" (Smothers 1984, B9).

The Mondale and Hart campaigns exemplify strategies of party-centered and candidate-centered politics, respectively. Mondale courted established party groups who supported him on the basis of long and faithful service to their causes. These groups were so much part of the Democratic establishment that they could change the rules to make Mondale's nomination more likely. Mondale's ability to garner support from some leading black politicians is an indication of the breadth of his insider support. Hart worked through volunteers he personally recruited and relied on a strategy of impressing the media to propel his campaign. His strategy was a carbon copy of Carter's from 1976. If Hart rather than Mondale had won the nomination, we would take it as evidence that party insiders were still unable to control the nomination process. However, Mondale did win.

Jackson's candidacy was different from Mondale's and Hart's in that it had little chance of winning. But Jackson was nonetheless playing a party game, because his goal was to pressure the Democratic Party to pay more attention to the policy concerns of African Americans. Whether this strategy succeeded is unclear.

The 1964 Republicans and 1972 Democrats have often been criticized—though not in this book—for nominating candidates who pleased intense policy demanders within the party but were unelectable. A variant on this complaint might be made against the 1984 Democrats. Mondale was strongly favored by labor and by top officeholders in the party, but he lacked both personal charisma and substantive appeal to suburban and southern

Democrats. If the party insiders really wanted to win the fall election, they might have swung to Hart, who began leading Mondale in national polls after Hart's early primary victories. But, of course, parties do not care only about winning; they want to win, but only with a candidate whom they can trust to protect their most important concerns. Since they did not trust Hart, they went with a candidate they did trust.

Democrats in 1988: Gary Hart and the Seven Dwarfs

Gary Hart was not any more popular with party insiders when he entered the contest for the 1988 nomination than he had been in 1984. But, on the basis of publicity won by nearly beating Mondale in 1984, he consistently led opinion polls in which Democratic voters were asked their preferences in the contest, and this made him a focal point. Seven other candidates entered the race, but a common view was that the field consisted of "Gary Hart and the Seven Dwarfs."[8]

Hart continued to play his new ideas theme, and it continued to be unpopular among the old Democrats who continued to dominate the Democratic Party. Ronald Brownstein (1987) wrote in the *National Journal*:

In February, he attended the AFL-CIO meeting in Florida and said he would welcome labor's endorsement in 1988. . . . But so far, he doesn't have much to show for his solicitousness.

. . . "He has spent a lot of time trying to make friends with labor, seeing people one-on-one; then he comes back and tells people who've lost half of their members that he isn't going to do anything for them on trade," said Vic Fingerhut, a labor pollster. "That's not a hard sell; it's an impossible sell. People walk out of the room with Hart just shaking their heads."

Brownstein segues from Hart's trouble with endorsements to his trouble raising money. "In the short term," he wrote

money may be the more pressing problem. . . . Since 1984, Hart has signed up several first-tier Democratic fund-raisers. . . . But there's been no rush of the big money givers toward Hart, and few in his camp expect him to raise as much money as quickly as Mondale did [in 1984]. "We are being kept alive by direct mail," [a Hart campaign official] said.

Although Brownstein does not explicitly link endorsements and fundraising, it is hard to believe that a Democratic candidate who left union leaders "just shaking their heads" wouldn't have trouble with fund-raisers

precisely for that reason. Moreover, Hart had trouble getting any sort of insider support. As Paul Taylor of the *Washington Post* wrote:

[Senator Gary Hart] is campaigning [in 1988] as a lonely front-runner. Aside from Jesse L. Jackson, no Democrat registered within 40 percentage points of him in a nationwide Washington Post/ABC News Poll completed last weekend. But Hart hasn't collected endorsements commensurate with his poll standing—nor, by his calculation, is he likely to.

Some of his opponents are spoiling to turn that disparity into an indictment of Hart's ability to govern. Building from questions raised about Hart in 1984, they will portray him as aloof, unable even in this ripe moment to line up backing because he remains uncomfortable with fellow politicians and political transactions.

"How can you lead the country if you can't lead your peers?" asked Christopher Mathews, a Democratic public policy analyst, who predicted that question will frame an "anybody but Hart" movement he expects to take shape within the party in the year ahead. (Taylor 1987, A4)

Hart's status as "lonely front-runner" suggests that voter support is by no means sufficient to ensure success in the invisible primary. Candidates must also be acceptable to core party groups and leaders, and Hart was not.

As it turned out, Hart dropped out of the presidential race shortly after these stories were written. A media firestorm erupted after Hart stated that he was engaged in no extramarital affairs but was caught by reporters spending the night with a woman who was not his wife. Except for this incident, Hart would surely have gone on—with or without party support—to compete in the regular primaries in 1988 as he had in 1984, and this prospect would have put party insiders under pressure to support him.[9]

Hart's departure from the race spared insiders this dilemma—while also depriving us of the opportunity to see how they would resolve it—but it did not solve the problem of whom to select as their preferred candidate. One of the so-called dwarfs was Jesse Jackson, who did not lack stature but did lack broad electoral appeal. In this invisible primary, fifty-seven of sixty African American leaders in the data we collected supported his candidacy, but, despite Jackson's efforts to build a "rainbow coalition," few important nonblack insiders did. Jackson is, therefore, an example of a factional candidacy.

Four of the other dwarfs—Michael Dukakis, Al Gore, Richard Gephardt, and Paul Simon—were probably acceptable within the party on policy grounds, but none proved to be a strong vote-getter in later elections. The party did have one seasoned politician who was both broadly acceptable

within the party and a charismatic campaigner, namely, Governor Mario Cuomo of New York, but he refused to enter the race.

What ought a wise and nimble party to do in such circumstances? In the very old days, it might have engineered a backroom deal for someone who "looked like a president" and was broadly acceptable within the party. Dukakis, Gephardt, or Gore would have been plausible candidates for this dubious honor.

In the new system, insiders seemed simply to bide their time. For labor, this was a conscious decision in response to a weak field.[10] For others, including governors who mostly refrained from endorsing anyone, we infer the same. "Many of the party leaders are simply waiting for one of the remaining candidates to prove himself," wrote Jonathan Wollman (1987) of the Associated Press in late November 1987. Even for those who did make endorsements, the pace was slower than in most years (see figure 5.2).

The role of top fund-raisers in this "wait-and-see" contest is noteworthy. Here is an account of how one top Democratic fund-raiser experienced the contest:

Some aspirants for the 1988 Democratic Presidential nomination have apparently concluded that it would help to have E. William Crotty on their side.

In recent days, Mr. Crotty has fielded phone calls from Representative Richard A. Gephardt of Missouri, who announced his candidacy this week, and former Gov. Bruce Babbitt of Arizona, who plans to announce next month.

Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware flew to Mr. Crotty's Florida home for dinner Sunday night. And on Monday Mr. Crotty met in Washington with Senator Dale Bumpers of Arkansas, who is expected to announce formation of an exploratory committee shortly. That night he was invited to a retreat in Colorado sponsored by former Senator Gary Hart but could not make it.

On Wednesday Mr. Crotty had lunch with Senator Albert Gore Jr. of Tennessee, who might be a long shot for 1988 but an attractive candidate in the future.

Mr. Crotty is senior partner in a Daytona Beach law firm. More to the point, he is a top Democratic fund-raiser and therefore a potentially key player in the 1988 contest.

Now that the early field has been thinned by Governor Cuomo's decision not to run and by Senator Sam Nunn's announcement that he will put his bid on hold, Mr. Crotty and other Democratic fund-raisers are finding themselves besieged.

"I feel a little embarrassed about it, really," Mr. Crotty said of the attention he is getting.

He said he expected to decide in the next few weeks but was not leaning toward anyone. "I'm sort of waiting," he said. (Berke 1987a, A24)

This account does not fit the story of candidate-centered politics. It seems, rather, a story in which a small number of big fish are very important. But, even in the stalled Democratic contest for the 1988 nomination, big donors did not appear to be independently important. This, at least, is the inference we draw from a self-conscious effort by top Democratic fund-raisers to set themselves up as king-makers. About forty of them formed a group called Impac '88, shared lavish meals at posh hotels, and met with and interviewed leading political figures in an effort to form a united front of their own. But no agreement developed and the wannabe kingmakers began going their separate ways. Finally, seventeen of the original forty coordinated on Al Gore and pledged to raise $250,000 each for their man, or $4.25 million. But as the primaries approached, they delivered only $320,000. This made Impac '88 the butt of many jokes (Berke 1987b, A30). In this invisible primary as in others, money could not drive the outcome, even when it faced no real competition.

With no commanding figure in sight, 27 percent of endorsements in the invisible primary went to Dukakis, with 22 percent to Gephardt as runner-up. However, the overall results obscure an interesting difference. A large fraction of Gephardt's support came from national politicians, mostly members of the House of Representatives, of which Gephardt was a party leader. Thus, among federal officeholders and former officeholders, Gephardt led Dukakis by a margin of 44 percent to 14 percent. But "out in the country," where far more endorsements were made, party sentiment ran the other way: Dukakis bested Gephardt by a margin of 40 percent to 7 percent. Given that delegates are won in contests out in the country rather than in Washington, this endorsement pattern probably gave Dukakis an advantage.

When voting by rank-and-file Democrats got under way, Gephardt won Iowa and Dukakis won New Hampshire, leaving the contest stuck in neutral. Party leaders now took another look at the race, but decided the time was still not quite ripe for jumping in. As David Broder (1988) wrote,

Ohio Gov. Richard F. Celeste, who backed Glenn and then Mondale in 1984 only to see Hart win the Ohio primary, said, "A lot of us moved ahead of our own supporters last time, so there's an inclination to lay back this time."

Celeste and a number of others regarded as potential Dukakis allies indicated that they are inclined to make a public choice after Super Tuesday, presuming Dukakis avoids a shellacking that day. "I told Mike [Dukakis] he's

got to show he can get votes in the South before most of us in the West will be ready to make a choice," said Idaho Gov. Cecil Andrus.

[New York Governor] Cuomo took a similar stance yesterday. "Super Tuesday will tell us a lot," he said, adding that the hopes to make an endorsement before his state's April 19 primary.

These comments suggest that the governors were thinking about the primaries in somewhat the same way as party leaders in the preform system, when demonstration of vote-getting ability was often critical to nomination. As the voter primaries continued, Dukakis lost South Dakota, but won Florida, Texas, Maryland, and Rhode Island, and this, perhaps especially the southern wins, told in his favor with party leaders. Dukakis got twenty-two new publicly reported endorsements after Iowa, while Gephardt got none. Dukakis also raised $6.9 million in the two months following Iowa and New Hampshire, but Gephardt only $2.6 million (Brown, Powell, and Wilcox 1995, table 2.2).

This is surely a breed of momentum, driven not by the effect of the media on voters but, as it appears, the effect of new information on party insiders.[11] Meanwhile, Jesse Jackson was running better than he had in 1984 and was in a virtual tie with Dukakis in the delegate hunt.[12] So when Dukakis outpolled Gephardt by about 28 percent to 14 percent in contests through Super Tuesday, Democratic leaders apparently saw no point in prolonging the decision. They closed ranks around Dukakis, leaving Gephardt unable to raise money and soon thereafter unable to run campaigns either (Gleckman 1988; Germond and Witcover 1989; Taylor 1988).[13]

One might suspect that, in a country with as many ambitious politicians as the United States, it would always be easy for parties to find someone with both broad acceptability among insiders and appeal as a vote-getter. The 1988 Democratic nomination shows otherwise. The party had a choice of two able campaigners (Hart and Jackson) and at least four candidates who were acceptable on policy grounds (Dukakis, Gephardt, Gore, Simon), but the two sets did not overlap. Mario Cuomo would probably have satisfied most Democrats on both grounds, but he stayed out of the race.

Hence, our analysis is that the Democrats failed to form a unified front in the invisible primary of 1988 because they had no candidate satisfying the two key criteria for a party nominee. They waited for the primaries to generate evidence on which candidate had stronger vote-getting appeal, and when that information came in, they made a choice. Several details of the case—the seven dwarfs epithet, the wait-and-and-see pace of endorsements, the reticence of labor and governors, the direct observations of journalists, and the later history of the candidates—fit this interpretation.

A nomination in which the party fails to reach a consensus prior to Iowa cannot in the end provide strong support for our theory of strong parties. One part of the narrative does, however, provide solid support: The reticence of party insiders to rally behind Hart, a politician unpalatable to labor, when he was the leading candidate in the race. Although the party had difficulty saying yes in 1988, it was able to say no. A party saying no to its most popular candidate does not fit the story of candidate-centered politics.

Republicans in 1988: An Inside Job

As Ronald Reagan's vice president, George Herbert Walker Bush coasted to a victory in the invisible primary of 1988 with 48 percent of all endorsements. Bush won almost exactly Reagan's percentage in 1980 and was well ahead of his nearest competitors, Bob Dole and Jack Kemp, who each had about 20 percent. Dole was the party's vice presidential nominee in 1976 and minority leader of the Senate. Kemp was a prominent member of the House of Representatives.

That Bush finished so far ahead of Kemp is notable and perhaps surprising. A handsome ex-professional football player, Kemp was outspokenly antitax, antigovernment, and anticommunist, and also uncommonly sunny and warm. Except that Reagan had been an actor rather than an athlete, the two were quite similar. Kemp was a favorite of the party's conservative base, making hundreds of speeches around the country and raising large sums of campaign money for the party. "When it came to conservative orthodoxy," wrote Germond and Witcover, "many on the New Right saw Kemp as more Catholic than the ideological Pope who spoke ex cathedra from the Oval Office" (1989, 67).

Bush, meanwhile, was not a conservative favorite. He had been brought into national politics by Nixon, who was identified as a Dewey man, and Bush had campaigned against Reagan in 1980 as a moderate. Bush worked hard to make up for past sins, traveling to numerous conservative events, but he was not fully convincing. "Where was he when he didn't need us," asked one conservative insider (72). Conservative columnist George Will wrote, "The unpleasant sound Bush is emitting as he traipses from one conservative gathering to another is a thin, tinny 'arf'—the sound of a lapdog" (Will 1986). We mention these nasty remarks because our theory would suggest that, in a perfectly efficient party system, someone like Kemp (favored by the policy-demanding base) would beat someone like Bush (an unpopular but well-positioned politician) in the invisible primary. But it didn't turn out that way, so we note the disconnect.

Yet there is no shortage of explanations for Bush's success. One is poll support for the nomination among rank-and-file Republicans. Bush usually got support in the range of 30 to 40 percent; Kemp did well to get out of single digits. We do not think polls are important in the invisible primary, but, again, we note the evidence.

A bigger factor is Reagan's personal support. By all accounts, Reagan appreciated Bush's loyal service as vice president and came to like his onetime opponent. Although Reagan never formally endorsed Bush, his high opinion probably mattered in party circles.

The factor to which we attach the greatest importance is that White House political staff rallied to Bush, most conspicuously a young operative named Lee Atwater. We complained earlier that it is hard to get information about political operatives, but Atwater was sufficiently notable that reporters have recorded his actions. We suspect—though, to be clear, we do not really know—that individuals like Atwater sometimes have great influence in the new system. Super politicians like Ronald Reagan would probably make their way to the top of any system, but for most of the rest, it may matter a great deal whether someone like Atwater is managing the campaign. So let us pause over Atwater.

Germond and Witcover mention Atwater in passing in their account of the 1980 campaign: "In South Carolina a skilled young professional named Lee Atwater, later to serve in Reagan's White House, had been pressed by Senator Strom Thurmond to run Connally's campaign there, but had refused for just that reason. On the basis of a study of eighty polls involving various candidates, Atwater had formulated a rule that no one could succeed if he had 'negatives' of 35 percent or higher, unless his 'positives' were at least 15 percentage points better. And thirteen polls on Connally, taken in a variety of states, had shown 'negatives' of 37 percent, 'positives' of only 26" (Germond and Witcover 1989, 107). Data crunchers in today's data-rich political system may now be able to formulate better rules of thumb, but in 1979 that was good analysis.

In 1985, Atwater agreed to work for Bush as the director of his political action committee. As Germond and Witcover comment in their 1989 volume, "The recruitment in itself was a signal to the party's most conservative elements that Bush had found a home on the right" (70). But Atwater had been looking out for Bush's interests longer than that. As early as 1982, Atwater wondered who would come after Reagan and "saw in [Bush] a potential that eluded many other political professionals in and out of Republican ranks." Hence, "in scheduling White House events, Atwater made sure that [Bush] . . . met the key political players." Atwater believed

that the candidate who could get an early lock on the South would be in an especially strong position, so "Atwater proceeded to sow Bush seeds across Dixie, in state after state where he had been involved as a consultant or campaign manager in Republican primary elections. Atwater knew most of the hundred or so individuals who constituted the activist core in each state and he set about bringing them aboard the embryo Bush campaign" (70).

Another journalist quoted an unnamed "Bush organizer," who might have been Atwater himself, on the effect of Atwater's early recruiting on another contender for the nomination: "There are only 10 or 15 guys in these southern states who know how to run a campaign, and another tier of about 80 [to] 90 good campaign workers. If you get them, there's nothing left for the opposition.... That's why [Bob] Dole could never get organized here because there was nothing for him" (Edsall 1988, A29). To put it in our language: the support needed to mount a campaign came from a small pond, not an ocean.

Getting a political operative on your side who was as well-regarded and who had as many political friends as Atwater seems like it would be worth far more than fund-raising prowess—but would, of course, attract campaign money as well. Bush also attracted other top talent to his team, including James Baker, Roger Ailes, and Robert Teeter. With a powerhouse team like that, even a so-so candidate could win the invisible primary and then the nomination.

A final point that should not be overlooked: Bush had long since abandoned the moderate positions on taxes and social issues that had been the basis of his 1980 campaign in the invisible primary, becoming a consistent supporter of the stronger form of conservatism that triumphed in the Republican Party in the 1980s. So, although conservatives distrusted Bush, they had no particular complaint against him beyond the fact that he had come late to the Reagan Revolution. If he had not come at all, it is unlikely he would have won the invisible primary.

The success of vice presidents in winning presidential nominations is striking. Walter Mondale, George H. W. Bush, and Al Gore each took this route to nomination in the reformed party system. Richard Nixon and Hubert Humphrey did so in the old system.

A big part of the vice president's job is to travel the country as a speaker at fund-raising events, presidential ambassador, fence mender, and perhaps dispenser of federal largesse. This puts the vice president in an excellent position to make friends, create obligations, and make himself, more generally, the center of attention. Eight years in the office of vice president

also gives party members a great deal of information—more, perhaps, than about any other candidate—about how that official is likely to behave in the top office. So if a qualified vice president is among the choices that party leaders can make, he is generally a safe choice as well.

But what should we make of the dissatisfaction of many conservatives with the choice of Bush? Could one argue that Bush was a strong candidate who forced party insiders, against their will, to knuckle under and support him?

It is fair to say that Bush forced his candidacy on some insiders. We should also note that two of the advisors who helped Bush in the invisible primary, Baker and Teeter, were members of Bush's 1980 campaign team and might therefore be considered Bush loyalists rather than party loyalists.

But it seems unfair to argue that Bush won the invisible primary because of his strengths *as a candidate*. Bush was, after all, the vice president, the second highest official in the Republican Party. When a party leader gets himself nominated over other strong candidates on the basis of strengths derived from his position as party leader, one can scarcely argue that candidate-centered politics has trumped party.

We also observe that the nomination of vice presidents is not automatic. Dan Quayle, who was George Bush's vice president, performed the usual chores of the office, but was never able to overcome the impression that he was a lightweight. In one famous incident, he became a national laughingstock when, in overseeing a spelling bee, he coached a young student to add an *e* to the end of *potato*. So when Quayle entered the invisible primaries of 1996 and 2000, insiders did not flock to him. As a journalist reported in 1995, Quayle "received discouraging responses as he sounded out potential political and financial backers around the country over the last several weeks" (Brownstein 1995, A1). The same happened in Quayle's second run, with the result that, in both nomination contests, he dropped out before the first contest in Iowa.

Thus, if vice presidents usually do well when they run for the top job, it is not because the party cannot say no in the invisible primary. It is because the party usually has no strong reason to say no to its vice presidents and former vice presidents.

We earlier expressed surprise that Bush was able to beat Kemp, but we should also note that Kemp "tested the waters" for another presidential run in 1996 and again decided to stay out—and again despite what seemed a so-so field. So the conservative favorite that Bush beat was not a powerhouse politician, but a merely promising one. The other candidate that Bush beat

in the 1988 invisible primary from his perch as vice president was Bob Dole, whose losing campaign against Bill Clinton in a weak economy in 1996 suggests he was not a super politician either.

Bush himself was neither an outstanding vote-getter nor a favorite of party activists, but performed well enough as vice president and positioned himself (with help from Atwater and others) to be acceptable on all key party issues. These minimal qualifications, plus the opportunity to campaign for the nomination that his party position gave him, were the keys to his success in the invisible primary. Bush might not have been able to win the invisible primary against a strong field—against, for example, a field that included someone like Ronald Reagan—but in a normal field, the assets of the vice presidency can make the difference. If a party has a top leader who's probably as good as any other candidate, and especially if the party's top campaign talent has decided he's their best bet, why would the party coalition not go along?

Democrats in 1992: The Man Would Not Play

As it had been four years earlier, the big story through most of the 1992 invisible primary was whether Mario Cuomo would enter the race. Cuomo gave himself deadlines to decide but kept missing them. Political insiders around the country made fun of the indecisive New York governor, calling him "Hamlet on the Hudson." But the consequences for the Democratic Party were serious. As late as October 1991, "The threat of a Cuomo candidacy was freezing Democratic activists and contributors who by this point might have been choosing another candidate to support." Complained Ron Brown, chair of the Democratic Party: "There was a major national force hovering and it kept people from focusing" (Germond and Witcover 1993, 118–19).

When, at one point, a rumor that Cuomo was about to declare his candidacy reached New Hampshire, it spread quickly through the state's community of political activists, who began telephoning the man expected to be Cuomo's state director. The list reached eighty people, including some of the top politicians in the state. But Cuomo held back, leaving his supporters in New Hampshire and elsewhere on a limb. Cuomo's troops, said a leader in another state, are "concerned about how long they have to wait. . . . They'd prefer it to be him, but if not, it's kind of, 'let my people go'" (Toner 1991, B7).

Our data are consistent with reports of a frozen field, as the rate of endorsements in the 1992 invisible primary was by far the slowest of any contest. Only 5 percent of all endorsements made in that cycle were made by

October 1, and 95 percent were made after that date. By contrast, in typical nomination contests, 50 percent of endorsements were made by October 1 of the year prior to the election.

Because Cuomo never did enter the race, we cannot be sure that party insiders really were waiting for him. But because much evidence points to that conclusion, we shall assume it is correct and consider its significance.

What the party's wait on Cuomo shows is that many of the "fish" in the Democratic Party had wills of their own and had decided they wanted to be caught by Cuomo rather than by the other candidates. If the exertions of candidates determine presidential nominations, one of the other eight active candidates should have been able to round up insider support. Certainly the two more factional candidates—Tom Harkin, who was intensely favored by labor, and Bill Clinton, the self-avowed New Democrat of this contest—should have been able to get going. But the party said no to the other candidates and "pretty please" to the noncandidate of its choice. In a system that, according to most scholars is bereft of party influence, the party was, in effect, attempting to draft an unwilling nominee. It's as if the fish in a small pond were ignoring the hooks of the fishermen trying to catch them but imploring one who had stayed home, "Come on out and compete—we'll bite for you."

The attempted draft is more notable for the fact that Cuomo never engaged in the kind of extensive, countrywide campaigning that almost all other candidates engaged in. The primary basis of his support was the keynote address he made at the 1984 party convention. The speech was a stirring appeal to the traditional Democratic vision of activist government trying to improve citizens' lives. Many in the party believed Cuomo's manner of articulating this vision would bring independent and weakly attached Democratic voters back to the party fold.

This belief, however, must have been largely independent of national polls. In eleven surveys in the period in which Cuomo was deciding whether to enter the race, an average of about 22 percent of Democratic voters supported him for the nomination. These were better numbers than other candidates in the race, but scarcely commanding. If many party insiders believed that Cuomo would be a powerhouse candidate, it must have been based more on their judgment than on the candidate's demonstrated support.

Cuomo kept the door open for a possible candidacy until December 20, the last day on which to file papers for the New Hampshire primary. About a month before that, candidate Bill Clinton began moving up in the pack. Clinton did campaign hard for the nomination, but many were suspicious that he, like Gary Hart, was insufficiently committed to party principles.

But unlike Hart, Clinton resolved to tell party insiders what they wanted to hear:

Late on the morning of Nov. 23, after Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton finished an address to the Association of State Democratic Chairs in Chicago, Karen Marchioro rose to ask about criticism that Clinton was little more than a warmed-over Republican.

The seemingly hostile question caused no anxiety among Clinton's staff. They had done everything they could to prepare the Democratic presidential candidate. They had caucused with Clinton on the speech, established their goals, salted the hotel ballroom with boisterous friends—and even encouraged hostile questions from the audience.

Marchioro, the Democratic chairman from Washington State, gave Clinton an opportunity to confront publicly his doubters among party liberals. She said she had spoken with her friend and Clinton adviser Stephanie Solien earlier that day.

"They wanted the question answered," Marchioro said. . . . Clinton's response, which evoked his grandfather's near-religious devotion to Franklin D. Roosevelt, drew strong applause. Clinton had cleared a major hurdle in his path to the Democratic nomination. (Balz and Dionne 1992)

Balz and Dionne point out that clearing this hurdle was more than symbolic; it paid some quite tangible benefits:

Until Chicago, fund-raising had been slack. But when the reviews came in, the fax machines at Clinton headquarters worked overtime to distribute the clips to potential contributors. Between mid-November and the end of 1991, Clinton raised roughly $2.5 million, according to the campaign. The effort was led by finance director Rahm Emanuel, who put together 27 events in 20 days, and Robert Farmer, who was Dukakis's chief fund-raiser in 1988.

Thus, we again see a link between a successful political appeal and success in fund-raising. At least in the invisible primary, candidates do not simply ask for money; they ask for money in order to advance political goals, and potential donors give them money for that purpose.

Not all of the Democrats who rallied to Clinton were thrilled to do so. The ambivalence was especially great for African Americans who, once again, had to choose between a candidate who inspired them and one who was only acceptable. As Thomas Edsall (1992) of the Washington Post described the calculations of one of these figures:

"I'm tired of betting on the damn loser," [said South Carolina State Senator Kay Patterson].

Earlier this year, Harkin came to South Carolina and announced that Jesse L. Jackson's "Rainbow Coalition is my agenda. Tell blacks not to read my lips, read my record of 17 years. The Rainbow Coalition, that's my agenda." Patterson, now a Clinton backer, said he liked to hear Harkin "spouting all these liberal ideas. But hell, ain't nobody going to vote for him. You can't win appealing just to black people. There ain't enough to win an election. You have to appeal to white folks."

The same sort of dilemma presented itself to union groups in the Democratic Party. Iowa Senator Tom Harkin was the natural favorite of many union leaders and activists, but their endorsements went mainly to Bill Clinton. A story from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch captures the sentiment among many union leaders:

Head or heart? That question is splitting the labor movement as trade unionists ponder which of two Democrats to support in the presidential race. Many political observers expected organized labor to overwhelmingly back Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa, given his long pro-union record and his stand with labor on the key issue of trade. But that's not happening; instead, Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton is holding his own. . . . In Illinois, for instance, AFL-CIO spokeswoman Sue Altman sees many of Illinois labor's heavy hitters going with Clinton. "It surprised us all here that Clinton could get as much as he has, because for Harkin, that's his appeal—to working people," Altman said. "I think a lot of people believe that Clinton is the most winnable candidate, and we all feel that we have got to get (President George) Bush out of the White House or working people are done for in this country." Yet, she notes, many unionists feel Harkin could be "another Franklin Delano Roosevelt, if there is a way to get him elected." That dilemma—success vs. sentiment—plagues labor nationwide. Rick Scott, political director for the 1.3-million-member American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, said his members were "evaluating electability along with issues." "They'd rather have someone who says some things they may not agree with 100 percent but who will get into the White House," Scott said. Such talk infuriates Sam Dawson, political director of the 650,000-member United Steelworkers of America. "I'm from Texas, and as (ex-Texas football coach) Darrell Royal says, 'You dance with who brung you'—and that's what I think you need to do in politics." . . . "Labor people are ready to put their egos away," said Duke McVey, president of the 500,000-member Missouri AFL-CIO. "Our people want a winner." (Dine 1992, 1A)

Harkin was naturally frustrated by this development, but tried to put the best face on it. "I've never said that every union is going to support me," he said. But he also said he hoped the big unions would endorse him, and added, "I wish they'd hurry up" (Berke 1992, A1). But they never did.

Taylor E. Dark (1999, 191) sees strong parallels between the way labor responded to John Kennedy in 1960 and the way it responded to Clinton in 1992.

In 1960 Hubert Humphrey played a role comparable to that of Tom Harkin in 1992: the traditional heart-throb of the liberals—an ardent defender of the old-time religion, but an unlikely victor in the general election. John F. Kennedy in contrast, was not as close to the labor movement and was deemed more unreliable in his politics, but union leaders still swung their support behind his candidacy after the early primaries showed that he was the most electable choice. In similar fashion, Clinton garnered more union support as he succeeded in the primaries, despite his mixed record on union issues in Arkansas. And in both elections the most distrusted of the candidates—Lyndon Johnson in 1960 and Paul Tsongas in 1992—were forced out of the race as serious contenders well before the convention.

Also common to both periods was that the union leaders were more interested in supporting an electable Democrat than in securing the nominee who was the most "correct" on union issues. As one AFSCME leader put it, "We believe that we need to be about winning in 1992. . . . If we went for Harkin we probably could get 90% of our agenda. If we went for Clinton we probably could get 85% of our agenda. But it's Clinton who, in my opinion, can get us to the White House." This kind of pragmatic bargaining stance was familiar, having guided unions in 1960 and earlier years, and it now produced a similar result: the nomination of a mainstream Democrat willing to support labor on most of its key issues.

These observations, though anecdotal, constitute evidence that Democratic insiders were well aware of the imperative to shun factional favorites for the sake of a united front behind a candidate who could win in November.

According to several journalistic accounts, Clinton's Chicago speech embracing traditional party values and one or two others at about the same time marked the take-off point in his drive for the nomination (Germond and Witcover 1993, 160; Goldman et al. 1994, 82–83). He ended up with 65 percent of the endorsements in an eight-man field, with almost all of the endorsements coming in the two months following the November speech. The rush to the Arkansas governor at the end of the invisible primary was so rapid that, except for the long hesitation over Cuomo, it might have

seemed the party had no ability to resist a politician who subsequently proved his mettle as a vote-getting champion. But thanks to Hamlet on the Hudson, and the long hesitation over the Seven Dwarfs of 1988, we can see that the choice of Clinton was a genuine choice, not a capitulation.

Republicans in 1996: Focal Point Politics

In their first fully open nomination since Ronald Reagan's in 1980, the Republicans suffered a dearth of good candidates. The candidate with the deepest pockets was Malcolm "Steve" Forbes, a millionaire publisher who shelled out $25 million of his own money to fund his run for the presidency. Forbes, along with his signature issue, the Flat Tax, attracted substantial media attention but not much else. He won only 1.5 percent of insider endorsements and was an early dropout from the voter primaries.

Another candidate who plotted a money-centered strategy was Senator Phil Gramm of Texas. According to a profile in *Texas Monthly* (Burka 1995), Gramm's staff noticed that the candidate who was most successful in pre-Iowa fund-raising had won all recent nominations. With this in mind, Gramm took the chairmanship of the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) for the 1992 and 1994 elections. This enabled him to travel around the country at party expense, making friends with the party's biggest donors. In launching his presidential campaign in 1995, he tapped into the same party networks, raising nearly twice as much money as his next nearest competitor in the first quarter of 1995. Gramm also made a concerted effort to gain early endorsements and did a reasonably good job.

With this flurry of early success, Gramm made a bid to become the focal point of a generally unexciting field. Gramm, we might add, is an academic economist who is likely to have an expert's understanding that an early focal point in a coordination game can dominate the process.

There was, however, another focal point in the contest. Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole had been the vice presidential nominee in 1976, the second-place finisher for the presidential nomination in 1988, and the most visible national media presence of any candidate in the race. Moreover, he was not shy about asserting that "It's my turn" for the nomination, which may be loosely translated as, "If there are no outstanding choices, I'm the focal point." Early public opinion polls also favored him over Gramm.

The invisible primary thus opened as a contest of Gramm versus Dole. In the first round of endorsements, Gramm outpaced Dole by a margin of eighteen to four. In another conspicuous display of early strength, friends of Gramm staged straw polls in states friendly to his ideological coloration, which Gramm won.

However, the focal point stratagem failed. If Gramm used his Senate leadership position to build his fund-raising network, so did Dole in his role of Senate Majority leader. As Dan Balz wrote in the *Washington Post*:

Dole reached out to governors immediately after the 1994 elections, promising to make relief from federal government mandates his first order of business in the Senate and encouraging them to become partners with congressional Republicans in reforming welfare, Medicaid and other domestic programs. Even before he had announced his candidacy, Ohio Gov. George V. Voinovich had announced his support.

[Dole's] recruitment of governors mirrors the strategy George Bush used to win the 1988 nomination, and he has used their support not only to build a national political organization *but also as the backbone of a fund-raising machine that has outdistanced competitors.*

Dole's campaign has carefully choreographed the gubernatorial endorsements, then followed them up with a fund-raiser in the state a month later. Those fund-raising events raised $3.4 million in New York, $800,000 each in California and Ohio, $700,000 in Pennsylvania, almost $600,000 in Illinois.

"The governors are incredibly important in their own states, in getting the best people and raising the money and helping to win the states," said Robert Teeter, who managed Bush's campaign in 1992 and served as a senior strategist in 1988. (Balz 1995, A1; emphasis added)

Twenty-seven of the party's thirty-one governors made pre-Iowa endorsements of Dole, most toward the end of the invisible primary. As in other invisible primaries, this political support was, as Balz emphasizes, closely tied to financial support (A1).

The invisible primary was thus fought by two of the Republican Party's top leaders, each of whom used his position in the party to build support among other party insiders. Either candidate could therefore win without endangering our thesis of party resurgence. As it turned out, the more highly ranked leader won in a landslide with 68 percent of insider endorsements in a twelve-candidate field. Gramm, who got most of his support at the start of the invisible primary, finished second with 18 percent.

Meanwhile, Patrick Buchanan, a social conservative, was mounting another kind of campaign. In 1992, he had taken on incumbent President George Bush in the state-by-state primaries, winning 38 percent of the vote in New Hampshire and making respectable showings in several other states. That fact that he had no chance to win did not faze him.

With no Republican incumbent president in 1996, Buchanan's prospects seemed brighter. His performance in 1992 suggested that he had a natural base of support of 20 to 30 percent of the Republican vote in a good number of states. If he could win the first primary in New Hampshire—as, in fact, he did in 1996—he might generate a powerful wave of momentum that would garner him considerably more support. Moreover, the first contest after New Hampshire was in South Carolina, the kind of socially conservative state where Buchanan ought to do especially well. And if Buchanan could win South Carolina after winning New Hampshire, he might really be off to the races. His chances of nomination were probably still not high, but he could certainly make a mess of the Republican primaries, and who could know what might emerge from the confusion?

Both campaigns recognized the potential importance of South Carolina and worked to line up endorsements in the Palmetto State. By our count, Dole won this skirmish easily, with twenty endorsements to Buchanan's zero. Many of Dole's endorsements, moreover, came from top party and religious figures, who worked closely with the state Republican Party. Thomas Edsall (1996a) gives the following account of the factional struggle on the eve of the vote:

Citing the support of many county chairmen of the South Carolina Christian Coalition, such Dole backers as Gov. David M. Beasley and former governor Carroll A. Campbell Jr. are banking on winning enough of the Christian right to combine with a plurality of other voters to win overall [in the primary].

Roberta Combs, chairman of the South Carolina Christian Coalition, is publicly neutral, but Dole supporters openly boast of the help she is providing and note that her husband has endorsed the Kansas senator.

"We've got a lot of support there. In our internal polling, we win the right-to-life vote, we win the Christian Coalition vote," said Warren Tompkins, Dole's southern strategist.

He said the only weakness is what he called the "Bob Jones strain of religious conservatives," referring to the fundamentalist Bob Jones University in Greenville.

The fact that Dole, who was pro-life but not outspokenly so, could hold the support of the state's religious establishment against the outspoken social conservatism of Buchanan is notable. It shows that, consistent with our notion of party resurgence, key Republican groups were resisting the impulse to faction and were instead pulling together as a party.

As it turned out, Dole scored a solid victory over Buchanan in the South Carolina primary, thereby putting an end to the latter's momentum in a

state Buchanan might well have won. But South Carolina leaders may have paid a price for their role in Dole's success, for as Edsall also noted:

Interviews with voters at a Thursday night Christian Coalition "God and Country" rally showed overwhelming support for Buchanan, and very little for Dole. The support for Dole among South Carolina Christian Coalition leaders has provoked some resentment.

Robert Taylor, dean of the school of business administration at Bob Jones University, said some Christian Coalition leaders have adopted a relationship with GOP leaders of "I'll scratch your back if you'll scratch mine." He warned that some of these leaders "might be in jeopardy, might find they are no longer leaders."

The theoretical point here is that important leaders were willing to play their role in creating a united party front even when it was not in their interest as factional leaders to do so.

The storyline in 1996 is in the end very simple: Bob Dole won the invisible primary because leading members of his party rallied to him as the leader of the party. Even some religious leaders who might have been expected to back the more socially conservative Buchanan wound up backing Dole. It would be hard to argue that Dole was an especially strong candidate, or even a strong leader, but party insiders mostly rallied to him anyway. His most serious opponent in the voter primaries, Buchanan, made notably few inroads in Dole's support in the invisible primary.

The Democrats in 2000: Same Old Same Old

Vice president Al Gore beat former Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey in the invisible primary by 82 percent to 18 percent—a margin vastly greater than the amount, if any, by which Gore was actually a stronger candidate than Bradley. Gore did this by exploiting the advantages of the job of vice president. Unlike his predecessor, he avoided major gaffes and burnished his credentials as a serious politician by writing a book that was well-received in his ideological camp.

Despite Gore's advantage in political support, Bradley raised nearly as much campaign cash—the only candidate in this period to run even with the winner of the invisible primary in fund-raising. Journalists attributed this feat to contacts he developed as a leading member of the Senate Finance Committee.

Bottom line: Party leader uses position in party to get presidential nomination. His opponent raises lots of campaign cash, but it makes little difference.

The Republicans in 2000: Two Strong Candidates, One Big Winner

George W. Bush did in 2000 what Mario Cuomo would probably have done in 1992 if he had entered that race: Win the invisible primary without breaking a sweat. Bush skipped many of the candidate forums and waited to make his first campaign trip to Iowa until June 1999. He did much of his campaigning from the governor's mansion in Austin, to which party leaders and well-heeled donors traveled to listen to him speak, exchange a few words, and offer support. As reporter Dan Balz wrote,

Politicians from Iowa, whose precinct caucuses kick off the presidential nominating process, normally wait for candidates to come to them. But [Iowa State Representative Chuck Larson] was one of a dozen Iowa legislators who chartered two planes that day to fly to Austin, and he didn't leave disappointed.

"We have had an opportunity to meet (candidates) Steve Forbes and Dan Quayle and the others, and they're all very sharp and competent and capable," Mr. Larson said. "But after meeting George Bush, you know that if he runs, he will be the next president of the United States."

The Texas capital is in the grip of a phenomenon that may be unique in the annals of presidential campaign startups. As a slew of other Republican candidates make pilgrimages to Iowa and New Hampshire and struggle for money, media attention and political support, the world is rushing to Mr. Bush's door in what has become the information age equivalent of William McKinley's front-porch campaign of 1896. (Balz 1999, A1)

Wealthy donors were prominent among those making the pilgrimage to Austin. Bush was so popular with them that, well into the invisible primary, he had not "had to spend one minute on the telephone pleading for donations—a luxury not enjoyed by most other candidates. 'Pick up the phone and dial for contributions?' Mr. Bush asked in an interview on Friday. 'Not at all.' Mr. Bush simply shows up at fund-raising events" (Berke 1999b, A13).

Bush's most enthusiastic support came from the office-holding wing of the Republican party, especially its governors. Republican governors meet annually, and the one from Texas made a good impression on his peers. Earlier than in any other invisible primary, governors signed on to the Bush campaign (see table 6A.2), and they quickly became major factors in his fund-raising efforts. Half of the GOP's governors were working for him by early 1999. As Washington Post reporter Susan Glasser (1999) added:

The 13 governors who have endorsed Bush are also key to the money chase. Michigan's Engler, for example, "has launched full bore into a major fund-raising

effort on behalf of Bush," said his spokesman. "He is doing a significant number of phone calls."

In Massachusetts, Gov. Paul Cellucci has put his political team on the Bush assignment, and they rounded up 16 key Bay State fund-raising types to send to Texas 10 days ago, including former governor Bill Weld. The 1 1/2-hour lunch at Shoreline Grill in Austin featured a pep talk from Bush. "I expect 95 percent of the key Massachusetts Republican fund-raisers will be nailed down for Bush," said Cellucci adviser Rob Gray. "*Our organization is transferable.*"

Bush's allies have turned the airport in Austin into a hub for prospective fund-raisers. Almost every day, delegations like those from Massachusetts arrive. (emphasis added)

That the financial resources of governors—as well, one must suspect, as the resources of former governors and other locally important politicians—may be "transferable" to presidential candidates is a point of utmost importance. It indicates that the money that leading candidates raise is, in some significant part, a party resource rather than a mere candidate resource.

Journalistic accounts make clear, however, that party officials are not the only source of funds. Private citizens, ranging from wealthy industrialists to persons described in newspapers as "professional fund-raisers," are also important. Yet such people are not lone rangers; they are partisan, strategic, and often hierarchically organized. In short, they are best understood as an arm of the contemporary political party. Consider the following excerpts from a description of George W. Bush's money-raising operation:

The fund-raising structure Bush's advisers are assembling is a pyramid—"the air gets thinner as you go up," is how Sheldon Kamins, a Potomac developer who will help lead the Maryland fund-raising, put it.

At the top are a few fund-raisers with national networks of their own—Bush money veterans such as Washington business consultants Wayne L. Berman and Peter Terpeluk Jr. and Michigan businessman Heinz C. Prechter.

In the battle for what one Bush veteran called "the name brand people" in GOP fund-raising, the Texan hasn't won every round. Several of the biggest Rolodexes in New York, for example, are holding back as Bush and his top advisers negotiate with Gov. George E. Pataki, who has been floating his own presidential hopes of late. . . . "It far transcends the Washington establishment," said one former senior White House adviser to Bush. "It's certainly one part Bush family, one part Republican diehards and it's one big part Texas."

The Bush mobilization has featured a procession of more than 400 fund-raisers—a who's who of the Republican rich and powerful—flying to Austin to hear his pitch.

[Even Bush's] opponents concede they can't compete with Bush for the key fund-raisers. "He's done a superb job in locking up the party establishment," said Ari Fleischer, spokesman for Elizabeth Dole (Glasser 1999, A1).[14]

The notion that there are "brand names" in a "Republican establishment" of big campaign donors is, once again, a point of significance. It indicates that some part—we suspect a rather large part—of what is often derogated as "fat cat" or "private" money is, rather, a form of organized *party* support.

Journalists often described the Bush campaign as "assembling" and "locking up" support of various individuals. But were the individuals thus "assembled" entirely passive in the matter? Were they "locked up" by some involuntary means? Were they incapable of saying no, as union officials said to Gary Hart? Were these Republican elites somehow unable to instead say yes to Dan Quayle, Elizabeth Dole, Orrin Hatch, Lamar Alexander, or any of several other prominent Republicans who tested the political waters in 2000 but did not actually enter the primaries? One assumes not. The party officials who turned the airport in Austin into "a hub for prospective [Bush] fund-raisers" had many choices. That they lined up behind Bush indicates that they were choosing to support him at least as much as he was choosing to "assemble" them. This difference in emphasis is important, because it is the difference between a candidate-centered and a party-centered view of presidential nominations.

But while Bush was a powerhouse candidate, he was not so powerful that he could ignore his party's intense policy demanders. Even economic conservatives were initially wary of him, recalling that the elder Bush had raised taxes and that the younger Bush called himself a "compassionate conservative." "We don't know yet [about Bush]," said David Keene, chairman of the American Conservative Union in fall 1998 (Romano 1998, B1). Economic conservatives attach particular attention to candidates' willingness to sign the anti-tax-increase pledge of Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. Bush at first refused, citing a long-standing policy of avoiding pledges of advocacy groups. But in June 1999, he signed the Norquist pledge anyway, and this seems to have satisfied the economic right. Later in the campaign, when other Republican candidates attacked Bush's tax program as insufficient, Norquist came to his defense.

Social conservatives within the party also felt that the elder Bush had betrayed them and were wary of being twice burned by the Bush family. At a 1998 meeting of fifteen conservative leaders, some favored a third-party candidate in 2000 if the Republican party failed to satisfy them. According to a newspaper report,

California Gov. Pete Wilson was generally viewed as unacceptable by this group, and there were some present who described Texas Gov. George W. Bush in the same category as Wilson, according to sources who attended. Andrea Sheldon, executive director of the Traditional Values Coalition, said the danger of a George W. Bush presidency is that "like father like son." President Bush "gave us [Supreme Court] Justice [David] Souter. Souter turned out to be a real disaster," she said. (Edsall 1999)

By the following spring, however, many religious conservative leaders were rallying to Bush. Under the headline "Conservatives Shield Bush's Abortion Stand from Right Wing," *Washington Post* reporter Thomas Edsall wrote,

Key leaders of the conservative establishment have begun an aggressive defense of George W. Bush's abortion stand in an effort to blunt attacks on the Texas governor's presidential campaign from the Republican Party's right wing.

Just as such candidates as conservative activist Gary Bauer, publishing heir Malcolm S. "Steve" Forbes and television commentator Patrick J. Buchanan are beginning to gear up to use abortion to slow the momentum behind Bush, such antiabortion luminaries as Christian Coalition chairman Pat Robertson and David N. O'Steen, executive director of the National Right to Life Committee, have stepped in to defend Bush's abortion position.

"Governor Bush has a pro-life record and has taken a pro-life position," O'Steen said in a statement. (Edsall 1999, 4)

But some social conservatives accepted Bush without embracing him. The problem they faced was a standard one in party politics. Two candidates in the race, Pat Buchanan and Gary Bauer, fully and enthusiastically embraced their agenda. At the same time, Bush refused to promise an anti-abortion litmus test in judicial appointments. In order to remain attractive to centrist voters, Bush would promise only to appoint judges who would follow the Constitution. The implication was that the nominees would be solidly pro-life, but Bush would not say so.

Eventually, conservative leaders decided to take Bush at his implied word and to rally their supporters. According to Richard Berke of the *New York Times,*

In appeals to the politically active members of their groups . . . the conservative leaders make clear that they believe Mr. Bush can win the election if he is left politically unfettered on the issues—and that he will support their causes once in office.

David N. O'Steen, executive director of the National Right to Life Committee, said Mr. Bush "would be as effective a pro-life president as anyone seeking the office." He said his group was contacting members in its 3,000 chapters to counter "other Republican candidates who will go after the front-runner—that's not helpful to the pro-life movement. . . ."

One of the most influential conservative voices, James C. Dobson, leader of Focus on the Family, whose daily radio show draws five million listeners, has stayed silent for months. . . . Dr. Dobson has for years been particularly close to Mr. Bauer but has not endorsed him despite pleas from the Bauer campaign. (Berke 1999b, A1)

The implied deal between Bush and the religious right was not brokered in a smoke-filled room, but it was much like an old-fashioned backroom deal. And Bush appeared to keep his side of it. When, several years later, two openings came up on the Supreme Court, President Bush came through with nominations that, by initial indications, were as good as the religious right could have hoped for.[15] Bush also vetoed a bill that would have expanded public funding of stem cell research, another important issue for the religious right. This was a party system working as intense policy demanders want it to work.

At the end of the invisible primary, Bush had the support of all but one Republican governor and 65 percent of other public endorsements in a field of six active candidates—a victory as lopsided as any politician could hope for. The runner-up, Senator John McCain, got only 10 percent of endorsements.

That Bush ran in the invisible primary so far ahead of McCain, a media star and charismatic campaigner in his own right, seems notable. Bush was, to be sure, the bearer of a famous name, and in a competition in which becoming the focal point can matter, perhaps the Bush name is a sufficient explanation for all that happened. But more seems to have been involved. McCain was, as we observed earlier, a maverick. His signature issue was campaign finance reform, which he pursued despite the possibility that it might, if enacted, deprive the Republican Party of its fundraising advantage over the Democrats. His campaign finance proposals also alarmed important Republican interest groups, such as the National Rifle Association, which feared that their ability to make big contributions to the party would be undermined. McCain also made a point of forcing Senate roll-call votes on legislative provisions that he considers "pork"— that is, measures that benefit the local supporters of members of Congress but are not economically justified—and on the privileges ("perks") of the Senate as a whole, such as free parking at city airports. By forcing senators

to vote publicly to maintain their privileges, he embarrassed them while making himself look good to voters. McCain's tactics played well in the media—one conservative columnist has referred to the Arizona Senator as "McCain (R–Media)"—but contribute to his reputation as a nonteam player. Republicans might rationally prefer to lose the presidency for one term rather than elect someone who might permanently undermine the party's competitive edge.[16]

In sum, Bush had not only the advantage of his family name, but the advantage of being a party man in what we take to be a strong party system. From examination of this case alone, we can't be sure which factor was more important.

What we can see, however, is that Bush did not have to fight hard for the bulk of the invisible primary support that enabled him to defeat McCain in the state-by-state primaries. The party mainly came to Bush on its own initiative in what we take to be the mark of a party-centered rather than candidate-centered system. Even religious conservatives, who supported Bush despite preferring other candidates, played the party game. We can also see evidence of implicit bargaining between Bush and the party's religious conservatives.

The Democrats in 2004: A Candidate-Centered Contest

If polls could make a nominee, Al Gore would have been the runaway Democratic choice in 2004. A CNN poll in late 2002 found that 38 percent of Democrats favored him for the nomination, with the next candidate, Joe Lieberman, far down in the pecking order with 13 percent support. Gore, moreover, seemed interested in the job. He traveled extensively in 2002, lost weight, shaved his beard, wrote two more books about political issues, built the nucleus of a campaign organization, made a guest appearance on *Saturday Night Live*—and then stunned the political world by withdrawing. As *Washington Post* reporter Dan Balz wrote,

Many party insiders blamed Gore personally for losing in 2000 and did not want him to run again, believing the party would be better off with a fresh face. Many of his advisers from the 2000 campaign had decided not to work for him again, and some already had signed on with several of his potential rivals.

Gore alluded to these problems last night. Noting that "the last campaign was an extremely difficult one," he added, "I think that there are a lot of people within the Democratic Party who felt exhausted by that, who felt like, 'Okay, I don't want to go through that again.' And I'm frankly sensitive to that, to that feeling." (Balz 2002, A1)

Gore's decision to withdraw was no doubt a complex one. But it is difficult to believe, in light of his extensive political activities in 2002, that he would have dropped out if party insiders were eager to have him back rather than, as many indicated, being reluctant or opposed. We thus view his withdrawal as a party decision as much as a candidate decision.

For those remaining in the race, the central political issue was Iraq. With the quick defeat of Saddam Hussein, the war was popular with the public through the early months of 2003, but it was extremely unpopular with the Democratic activists and donors who dominate the invisible primary. As a result, "the Democratic candidates are struggling to balance their desire to appeal to next year's primary voters—a majority of whom oppose going to war with Iraq—and their determination to establish their credentials as future commanders in chief.... No one wants to be against a successful war, but no one can ignore the voters who will pick the party's next presidential nominee" (Balz 2003a, 1).

The most prominent of the Democratic candidates—John Kerry, Joe Lieberman, John Edwards, and Richard Gephardt—had voted for the war in Congress and continued in varying degrees to support it. Of these, Kerry was often cited as the early front-runner, (Nagourney 2003, 14,), but his support for the war limited his appeal. This created an opening for Howard Dean, the little-known former governor of Vermont. "We told him," recalled one of his consultants, "he could run like John Kerry, or he could run like someone different. But it couldn't be a mainstream campaign, because the mainstream space was already taken" (Farhi 2003, 2).

Dean took the advice, turning against the Iraq war with a bitterness that went beyond normal discourse. "What were these people in the White House smoking?" he asked. Yet he reserved some of his harshest attacks for Democrats who supported the war. His party's elected officials, he suggested, were "cockroaches" who were not true Democrats. President Bush, he asserted, was conducting diplomacy by "petulance" and had "no understanding of defense." "Mr. President, if you'll pardon me, I'll teach you a little about defense," Dean offered (Kurtz 2003, 6).

This rhetoric drew an enthusiastic response from Democratic activists. Throughout the invisible primary, he drew the biggest crowds, raised the most money, attracted the most media coverage, and, at the end of 2003, emerged with the most support in national surveys of the Democratic rank-and-file. As the first voter contests approached, Dean led in state polls in Iowa and New Hampshire and was growing "stronger by the week" (VanderHei and Balz 2003, 1).

A central feature of the Dean campaign was use of the Internet to find, organize, and solicit people who opposed the Iraq war but had not previously

been active in politics. As Michael Barone has aptly observed, "Peace candidates in the past had an easy time finding supporters in university towns and high-income professional neighborhoods but had a hard time finding them anywhere else. Using Meetup.com and MoveOn.org, the Dean campaign located Iraq war opponents and Bush haters in every part of the country. It encouraged these supporters to find others and bring them into highly cohesive electronically connected communities" (U.S. News and World Report 2004, 36).

Meetup.com is an Internet venture that enables like-minded people to find one another and "meet up"; it was designed for hobbyists, but the Dean campaign became its top client. MoveOn is an online advocacy group that formed during the Clinton impeachment—the idea was to "move on" from the Lewinsky mess—but remained active in liberal causes. After Dean won a poll of its 41,000 members, MoveOn leaders permitted Dean to raise money through its Web site. The Dean campaign also created blogs and chat groups to discuss events and challenge fellow "Deaniacs" to give more money. By these unconventional means, the unconventional Dean raised $41 million in campaign funds, which was more than any candidate in party history, including Al Gore and Bill Clinton.

The response of party insiders to Dean's success was mixed. Part of the Democratic donor base actually joined the Deaniac surge. The Democratic Leadership Council, however, took the unusual step of open criticism. Dean, it said, stood for "weakness abroad and elitist, interest group liberalism at home" (Lambro 2004). "The Democratic Party is in danger of being taken over by the far left," said Senator Evan Bayh, a DLC member (Nagourney 2003).

Most Democratic leaders were neutral to negative on Dean, fretting anonymously to journalists that he would lead the party to disaster but taking few concrete steps to stop him. As the *Wall Street Journal* reported at the midpoint of the invisible primary, "There is no doubt that many establishment Democrats would like to knock Mr. Dean down, or out entirely. But to try to do that now, rival camps have decided, risks a boomerang effect boosting Mr. Dean's outsider appeal" (Calmes and Schlesinger 2003). Another journalist wrote, "there is general agreement that the party establishment is not capable of mounting a stop-Dean movement. 'What establishment?' one Democrat said sarcastically" (Balz 2003b).

The principal means by which party insiders control nominations is to throw their collective weight behind a candidate able to compete in the primaries. So, when none of the declared candidates appeared able to stop Dean, a group of party insiders centering on former President Bill Clinton urged a new candidate into the race, General Wesley Clark. Clark got some

quick endorsements, rose briefly to the top of the polls, but committed a series of gaffes and fell back into the pack.

With Dean the commanding front-runner at the end of the invisible primary, Al Gore and some other prominent Democrats endorsed him, saying it was time to close ranks behind the party's likely nominee. But only one of twenty-two Democratic governors and a handful of U.S. senators made endorsements, for Dean or anyone else.[17] This was the lowest rate of endorsements by top officeholders in either party over the period of our study. So while Dean won the invisible primary, he did not win it in the manner we claim is normal—by uniting the party behind his candidacy. Dean's success does, however, fit Polsby's model of a factional candidate—a candidate who seeks to parlay the intense support of one segment of the party into the party nomination.

In a period of about three weeks of intense campaigning in Iowa, however, Dean's factional campaign collapsed. Kerry, whose efforts to appeal to a wide segment of the party bore little fruit through most of the invisible primary, jumped into the lead, trounced Dean 38 to 18 on election night, and coasted easily to the nomination. Dean never won a primary or caucus except in his home state of Vermont.[18]

Other front-runners have stumbled in Iowa, but none lost as badly or faded as fast as Dean. What is to be learned from all of this?

One lesson is that there is no necessary connection between the invisible primary and the voter contests that follow. They involve different audiences, different appeals, and different skills. Blasting away at the establishments of both parties, Dean could excite activists, but he was much less adept at running a mass campaign for voters who were not zealots. As two *Wall Street Journal* reporters observed:

While Mr. Dean's sharp-tongued attacks on Mr. Bush and Democratic opponents originally propelled his candidacy, they might have turned off as many voters [in Iowa] as they have attracted. The candidate drew loud cheers when he lashed out on Jan. 11 at an elderly Bush supporter who interrupted one of his rallies in the town of Oelwein. "You sit down, you've had your say, now I'm going to have my say," Mr. Dean yelled. But Laree Randall, a 53-year old store owner in the audience, didn't join in the chorus, and wondered afterward about Mr. Dean's style. "Shouldn't it be toned down?" she asked. (Schlesinger and Harwood 2004)

This incident, one of several Dean gaffes in Iowa, was captured on tape and quickly turned into an anti-Dean television spot.

Dean recognized the need to soften his image, but his attempts to entice moderate voters and "guys with Confederate flags in their pickup trucks"

mainly brought him grief. As caucus day approached, he gave up on the center and returned to his strident rhetoric (Calmes 2004).[19] But after defeat, Dean suggested to reporters that he would "ease up on his year-long crusade to change the Democratic party." He would also be "softening the tone of his speeches and eliminating high-voltage campaign rallies in favor of dignified appearances where he would present himself as a mature ex-governor with a command of health care and the economy" (VandeHei 2004, 1; Nagourney and Wilgoren 2004, 1). But the mature Dean lacked the excitement of the rebel Dean and fared no better with voters than he had in Iowa.

What all this suggests is that Dean was never as strong with the Democratic rank-and-file as his record fund-raising and campaign-trail crowds suggested. Even when on top of the polls, he was not as strong as previous front-runners had been. Given this, it was likely that he would stumble in the primaries and that an "Anyone But Dean" option would emerge to test and quite possibly defeat him. Kerry captured that role, but others might have taken it.[20]

It also seems quite possible that if Democratic insiders had been a little more adept, they might have rallied to an "anyone but Dean" alternative earlier than they did and gotten that person—possibly Kerry—nominated. As it was, the party took a risk. Dean had enough money and momentum that, with slightly better luck, he might have gone on to be nominated, thereby potentially saddling the party with a nominee who was more stridently opposed to the war than the public was ready to accept. Perhaps Dean would have been another George McGovern, whose leftist positions as Democratic nominee in 1972 were embarrassing to the party for decades afterward.

A final lesson from the rise and quick decline of Howard Dean is the fragility of insider control of nominations. If parties are coalitions of intense policy demanders, then new groups of intense policy demanders are always a threat to enter and disrupt the party system. Much like the Vietnam war in the 1960s or the revolt against gold in the 1890s, the Iraq war furnished a wave of new policy demanders in 2004, and they did what new demanders would be expected to do. Dean, shopping for a viable niche, was as much their creature as they were his. Thus, now as in the past, party control of nominations is not likely to be much stronger than the party coalition is stable. But, by this argument, the Dean campaign provides, in itself, little reason to doubt the efficacy of party control in more normal circumstances.

Overall Conclusions

Our accounts of the ten contested nominations since 1980 have been guided by three questions, to which we will now suggest answers:

1. *Do party insiders make endorsements because they actually favor the given candidate, or because the candidate is so strong that party endorsers simply capitulate to him?* We found some, but not a great deal, of evidence suggesting capitulation. The most important case was in 1988, when many Republican conservatives had reservations about George H. W. Bush but went along anyway. So this might be called a case of candidate domination. Yet Bush was the party's vice president, he seemed to have the blessing of the party's revered leader, and the conservatives had no strong champion to run against Bush. If, as our analysis in this chapter suggests, the 1988 Republican contest is the best case for candidate domination, the argument is weak.

    The evidence of party resistance to candidate-centered pressure is not voluminous, but there is some. One case was the 1988 Democratic nomination, when Gary Hart had good poll support and, even more important, a record from 1984 showing that he was a strong national campaigner who might win whether insiders got on his bandwagon or not. Yet party groups distrusted him, which left him a "lonely front-runner" who could not raise money or endorsements. The other case was the 2004 Democratic nomination. Howard Dean achieved a commanding lead in both poll support and campaign donations, but failed to pull ahead on endorsements. The party's top officeholders were, as our data on both overall and gubernatorial endorsements show, notable in their failure to rally to this apparently strong candidate.

    Meanwhile, a series of weaker candidates, notably Walter Mondale in 1984 and Bob Dole in 1996, did achieve commanding insider support. And genuinely strong candidates, notably Bill Clinton in 1992 and George W. Bush in 2000, also achieved high levels of support from party insiders whose support, from our reading of the evidence, was in most cases genuine.

    Altogether, then, we find that no candidate lacking a preexisting position in the party succeeded in forcing large numbers of party insiders onto his bandwagon and, on the other hand, some clear evidence that such candidates could not succeed.

2. *Do candidates go trolling for support in a small pool of regular party activists, or do they build their campaign from a larger pool of one-time activists and persons loyal to them personally?* Two candidates achieved notable success in the invisible primary by building strong support among one-time activists and volunteers. These were Gary Hart and Howard Dean, but, as noted, they failed to get party insiders to go along with their candidate-centered efforts and failed also to get the party's nomination. A few other candidates—John Connally in 1980 and Pat Robertson in 1988—tried to build candidate-centered organizations but achieved even less success.[21]

3. *Do groups make decisions in light of the likely preferences of other groups and the need to win the fall election, or does each group support its own first-choice candidate, regardless of party considerations?* A factional candidate, in our use of the term, is one who tries to parlay support within a relatively narrow part of the party into nomination. Gary Hart in 1984 and Pat Buchanan in 1996 are perhaps the best examples of such candidates. Lacking broad insider support, they hoped to do better than expected in the early primaries and ride a wave of momentum to nomination. The question is whether party insiders sympathetic to their views will sign on to their campaigns, or will instead join with other candidates to create a united front.

We find only limited evidence of insider support for such factional candidates. Most notably, most religiously conservative leaders never supported a factional candidate of their persuasion despite several opportunities to do so. Labor unions mainly supported Clinton in 1992 over their factional favorite, Tom Harkin. In 1984, most African American leaders supported Jackson, but a significant group—Coretta Scott King, Andrew Young, Charles Rangel—stayed with the more broadly acceptable Mondale. In 1988, however, nearly all African American leaders in our endorsement sample gave their support to Jackson. Since Jackson had little more chance of proving broadly acceptable within the party than he did in 1984, we view this support as the one case in which intense policy demanders did predominantly rally to a factional candidate.

Although we have said that Democratic insiders mainly failed to support Howard Dean in 2004, some did, including two former high officials, Al Gore and Bill Bradley. The insider support that Dean got—about 27 percent of all endorsements in a year in which many insiders abstained from any endorsement—was mostly staunchly antiwar and hence factional. This support constitutes the most important evidence of insiders rallying to a factional candidate.

An important feature of our theoretical analysis is that, in coordination games such as we take the invisible primary to be, some candidates can win simply by getting out in front of the field and making themselves the focal point. We find an interesting mix of evidence on this point. Certainly the parties resisted some candidates who made themselves salient in weak fields—most notably Gary Hart in 1988 and Phil Gramm in 1996. We also

Overall, then, we take the bulk of our evidence to support the view that party insiders have largely controlled the outcome of nine of the last ten party nominations, with the exceptional case being 2004. And even in 2004, the outsider challenge to party insiders failed.

take the support of moderates for Bush in 1980 as resistance to the more salient Howard Baker. So one cannot say that parties generally fall into line behind the first candidate to get a little bit out in front. On the other hand, parties did go along with Walter Mondale in 1984, George H. W. Bush in 1988, Bob Dole in 1996, and Al Gore in 2000, each of whom we view as weak candidates in weak fields and each of whom launched his campaign from a position of party leadership. Although many factors contributed to their success, we view their wins in the invisible primary as consistent with the notion of focal-point politics.

An interesting question is whether some kinds of party insiders have more influence than others in the invisible primary. Suppose, for the sake of discussion, that we specify five types of party players: Top officeholders, group and ideological leaders, campaign donors, rank-and-file party activists, and campaign technicians (pollsters, professional fund-raisers). Which of these groups is most influential?

The first point to make is that the question is misleading in that it assumes a more hard-and-fast division than actually exists. Many party insiders, and perhaps most, entered politics as low-level activists working to elect their party's candidates. Some go on to play higher level roles—fund-raiser, campaign manager, officeholder—but this does not mean they cease to care about the party and ideological principles that led to their initial involvement. So perhaps it is better to ask: Which of the five group roles affords greatest opportunity for influence?

Even as qualified, the question may not have a strong answer. Low-level officials and rank-and-file party workers seemed the backbone of Ronald Reagan's candidacy, with governors coming along much later. But governors led the way in George W. Bush's nomination. Organized labor was probably the most important player in the nomination of Walter Mondale, but merely accepted Bill Clinton. Campaign technicians were perhaps the main force in the nomination of George H. W. Bush, but, from what journalists report, do not so clearly seem to have influenced any other win in the invisible primary. Many interest groups—labor, feminists, and civil rights groups in the Democratic party; religious and economic conservatives, as well as the National Rifle Association, on the Republican side—can probably veto any candidate they strongly oppose, but still cannot do a great deal to enable the candidates they most prefer to win the invisible primary.

Based on these salient examples, our tentative conclusion is that different types of players are influential in the invisible primary at different times, depending on the circumstances. Although our qualitative analysis in this chapter gives us reason to be dubious of the independent importance